

Military Involvement in the Inauguration of the President of the United States

Lesson Plan

Grades: Upper Elementary, Middle School/Junior High School

Goals: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will:

1. Recognize that the President of the United States is also the Commander-in-Chief of the American Armed Forces
2. Understand that the role of the President as Commander-in-Chief is designated in the Constitution as the head of the Armed Forces of the United States including the National Guard. This is stated in Article II, Section II
3. The Presidential Inauguration is a military change of command in which the American military acknowledges the authority of their civilian Commander-in-chief.
4. The U.S. military participates in the Presidential Inauguration to recognize civilian control of the armed forces, promote democracy and celebrate the commander in chief.

Vocabulary: Commander in Chief, Militia, National Guard, Regular, Inauguration

Tools: The attached worksheet and reading. Textbooks and dictionaries will help.

Background for this Lesson:

During the first Presidential Inauguration in 1789, it members of the New York militia and a small contingent of soldiers from the U.S. Army escorted George Washington to Federal Hall in New York City. The military escort of President Washington to the inauguration symbolically acknowledged the first civilian commander in chief and civilian control of the American military. This tradition of honoring the peaceful exchange of power to a civilian leader continues through the 2005 Inauguration. The President-elect of 2005 will be attended by members of the Joint Task Force-Armed Forces Inaugural Committee, a special command that consists of military personnel from all the U.S. Armed Forces. .

For the purpose of this lesson, key is the fact that the American commander in chief is a civilian. This is unique in western history for in many cases the leader of a nation is a monarch or a senior military officer. Throughout history many dictators including Hitler of Germany, Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Stalin of the former Soviet Union all donned uniforms to show that they were truly in power and controlled the military not only to defend their people, but to control their own people as well.

Lesson:

1. Pass out the worksheet and introduce the topic and possibly do so on a day near the actual 2005 Inauguration.
2. Briefly engage the students in a short discussion about the meaning of the Inauguration and the many duties the President performs.
3. Introduce the topic of the American Military and the many forms of ceremonial support our nation's military provides (escorts, color guards, & bands).
4. Have the students read the background statement or read aloud in class. Notice that vocabulary words are underlined.
5. Have the students complete the attached worksheet.
6. Assessment can be done informally through class discussion or by collecting the worksheets

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Historical Background:

During the first Presidential Inauguration in 1789, members of the New York militia and a small contingent of soldiers from the U.S. Army escorted George Washington to Federal Hall in New York City. The tradition of a military escort for the commander in chief goes



back to the American Revolution when General Washington ordered a special unit to protect and serve him. Officially called the Commander in Chief's Guard but also known as "Washington's Life Guard," this special unit consisted of exemplary soldiers from all 13 states at the time.

The escort of President Washington to the Inauguration not only reaffirmed the tradition of an escort for the commander in chief but also symbolically acknowledged the first civilian commander in chief and civilian control of the American military. The military escort at the first inauguration was comprised of both regular soldiers and militia that truly represented the American military at that point in our history and indeed today



As the country has changed and grown, so too has the military; although military involvement in inaugural tradition of honoring the peaceful exchange of power to a civilian leader



remains the same. The President-elect of 2005 will be attended by members of the Joint Task Force - Armed Forces Inaugural Committee, a special command that consists of military personnel from all the U.S. Armed Forces charged with organizing the ceremonial support for the inauguration. This

"joint" command contains service personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and National Guard.

The Constitution of the United States, Article II, Section. 2. Clause 1:

"The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States"

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Class: _____

Using your textbook, a dictionary or possible background knowledge, define the following terms in your own words:

Commander in Chief: _____

Militia: _____

National Guard: _____

Regular (in the context used): _____

Inauguration: _____

Questions:

1. What is the historical relationship between the Militia and the National Guard?
2. Why is it important for the military to acknowledge the President?
3. According to the Constitution, who controls the militia and the Army and Navy of the U.S.?
4. Why is this important to our Democracy?
5. Look at these two pictures. What do you notice about the clothing these two world leaders wear? What does this tell you about our democracy?

